

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 358 without my signature.

The goals of AB 358 are extremely important. I strongly believe that the State of California must continue its existing programs to guarantee that women are not discriminated against in state policies or programs. With the issuance of Executive Order S-6-04, my Administration has clearly established the state's equal employment policies without discrimination. All state agencies, departments, boards, and commissions shall recruit, appoint, train, evaluate and promote state personnel on the basis of merit and fitness, without regard to age, race, ethnicity, color, ancestry, national origin, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, disability or other non-job-related factors. Thus, this bill is duplicative of existing policy and unnecessary.

In addition, the Department of Health Services' Office of Civil Rights is responsible for ensuring that actions taken by all levels of management achieve the Department's equal employment opportunity objectives as well as ensuring equal access to health services for beneficiaries. The Office of Civil Rights annually conducts a workforce analysis to determine any statistically significant under-representations, hidden barriers and the policies or processes that may result in under-representation.

For these reasons I am unable to sign this bill at this time.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger